

FALLING COCONUTS.

Dew Makes Most of Them Drop From the Trees at Night.

"In the tropics when the coconut is wanted for planting," said an importer of the fruit, "the nuts are picked up when they fall from the tree where they have hung for about fourteen months in ripening. It is a fact not generally known that a majority of the nuts drop at night, which probably accounts for the small loss of life by coconuts falling upon the heads of the natives."

"The action of the heavy dew at night loosens the seal with which nature has provided the nut and allows it to fall. The nuts wanted for planting are either gathered into heaps or placed under sheds, where they are allowed to sprout before planting in order that good, healthy nuts may be selected, thus avoiding the possibility of planting 'blind' nuts that will not sprout, in which case much time would be lost in starting the coconut walks, as the orchards are called. When holes are dug, about three feet deep and twenty feet apart, the nut is carefully placed therein and covered with about a foot of soil. The hole is filled as the sprout grows until the latter reaches the surface, then it is left to itself, requiring no further attention. Should the place where the coconut is planted be any great distance from the seashore a quantity of salt is placed in the hole. The plant will grow in luxuriance, however, but a short distance from the shore, nearness to salt water being absolutely essential to its welfare."—Washington Herald.

MAKING STEAM WORK.

Unfortunate Inventors Who Antedated James Watt.

James Watt took out a patent on his steam engine in 1769, but as far back as 1543 there was a captain in Spain who constructed a vessel of 200 tons and propelled it at Barcelona in the presence of the Emperor Charles V. and his court by an engine, the construction of which he kept a secret. But an old document says that in it was a monster caldron of water and that there were two movable wheels on the outside of the vessel. The emperor was satisfied with its operation, but the treasurer of the kingdom objected to it, and so no encouragement was given to the enterprise. The poor inventor, whose name was Blas de Guere, worried and disgusted at the want of patronage, took the engine out of the vessel, and the secret of the machine was buried in his grave.

The incident was almost duplicated in France a century later. The famous Marquis de l'Orme, a celebrated Frenchman, who lived to be 134 years old, told in a letter to an admirer, dated 1641, of a man confined in a madhouse of Paris for urging that anything could be done by the force of steam. The man's name was Solomon de Coste, a native of Normandy, and it was because he had persistently followed Cardinal Richelieu, imploring him to take an interest in his invention, that he was put behind bars.—Kansas City Star.

Browning a Great Talker.

If Lord Houghton talked more than most people he certainly was eclipsed by Mr. Browning, who spoke louder and with greater persistency than any one I have ever come across in my life. Although I had known him as a girl, we did not renew our acquaintance until after my marriage, when I saw a great deal of him, as he constantly came to our house. He dined with us often and used to come and see me generally every Sunday afternoon. He was very agreeable and kind, and, although I was never one of his devoted followers and often told him I had never been able to read a line of his poetry, he still continued his friendship with me. I think most people feared rather than loved him—certainly men did, but women adore poets, and they worshiped Mr. Browning.—From Lady St. Heller's "Memories."

Forgot His Own Tongue.

A traveler in arctic Siberia, Mr. Vanderlip, a gold hunter, told the following of his return to civilization: "I found that half a dozen of the officers and men of the steamer which my employers had sent for me had come to hunt me up. The captain dismounted, and I tried to address him in Russian, but he said, 'You forget that I speak English.' Now, it may seem scarcely credible, and yet it is true, that for a few moments I was totally unable to converse with him in my native tongue. I had not used a word of it in conversation for months, and my low physical condition acting on my nerves confused my mind, and I spoke a jumble of English, Russian and Korak. It was a week before I could talk good, straight English again."

Potato Scones.

To bake potato scones sift a cupful and a half of flour with a half teaspoonful of salt and two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and rub in three tablespoonfuls of shortening. Add one cupful of light, freshly mashed potatoes, add one well beaten egg and enough milk to make a soft dough. Roll out half an inch thick, cut and bake on a hot griddle or in a hot oven. Serve very hot, with plenty of butter.—Suburbanite.

A Wise Guy.

"Gustav's letters to me are exceedingly dull and commonplace," said one fair girl.

"Don't you know why?" responded the other.

"No."

"Gustav once served on the jury in a breach of promise case."—Washington Star.

Foolhardy Snake Keeper.

The only fatal case of snake bite on record in the London zoological gardens was directly due to the foolishness of the victim. He was in charge of the snakes and, coming in one morning with some friends, began to boast of his power over the creatures and the extent to which they would submit to be played with by one whom they knew. This led to practical experiments. The overconfident keeper took an Indian cobra from its comfortable sleeping place and, declaring he was a snake charmer, proceeded to swing it about his head and play other tricks with it. A native snake charmer would have known there was no more certain way to rouse the snake's temper than this, for the race abhors rough handling or sudden movement of any sort. The result of the exploit was that the keeper was bitten on the nose. He was hurried off to the hospital, but died in a few hours.—London Globe.

The Dreadful Looking Person.

Rodin, the world famous French sculptor, has had a wonderful career, and, like most men who have risen from obscurity to fame, he still preserves much of the simplicity of his early days. One day he was entertaining a few artists, among them a German who had never before visited the sculptor. At dinner they were waited on by a particularly plain looking woman.

"I'm surprised," remarked the German during one of the woman's absences from the room, "that you should have such a very dreadful looking person about you. Why don't you get a nice, good looking young housekeeper?"

There was a sudden ghastly silence. Then Rodin smiled.

"I don't like to be waited on at meals by servants," he explained. "The dreadful looking person is my wife."

The Texas of Europe.

In the reminiscences of Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, "I Myself," the author tells of her first meeting with Henry James, whom she calls "a sort of Massachusetts Sir Galahad."

The first time I met him I sat next him at a dinner. I had just come to London, and he asked me if I liked it. I said I hadn't made up my mind, and he said I would—that in London you were allowed every independence of opinion and action, only you must contribute something socially—beauty and he bowed very courteously to me, and I bowed very prettily to him or wit or agreeableness—and then London accepted you. I said: "History repeats itself. In Texas, where I was born, they say a man is not asked his nationality, his religion or his politics, but only if he is a good fellow." "Ah," said Mr. James, "then London is the Texas of Europe."

Jolted Mark Twain.

"Mark Twain," said a magazine editor, "brought out 'Joan of Arc' anonymously. Before he acknowledged its authorship he sometimes fished for compliments about it. One evening at a dinner he said carelessly to a senator:

"Are you a novel reader?"

"Yes, a great novel reader," was the reply.

"I don't suppose you're following that anonymous new serial, 'Joan of Arc'?"

"Indeed I am, though, every installment."

"What do you think of it? Is it good?"

"That's hardly a fair question to ask me," the senator, who knew the book's real author, replied. "You see, I wrote 'Joan of Arc' myself."

Brides in Iceland.

A quaint old superstition in Iceland is that every bride must invite all her friends to a dinner in her own home and every article of food must be prepared by the bride herself. If she is successful in pleasing her guests she not only receives praise for her own skill, but helps along her younger sisters, who are then assumed to be equally good at cooking and consequently have a much better chance of getting married.

Woolgathering.

"For one's wits to go woolgathering" is an allusion to a pitiful industry sometimes seen in older countries. In parts of France, Germany and Spain very old people are sometimes employed in gathering wool from bushes in sheep pastures, where it has been plucked from the fleece as the animals pass too close to the branches.

Kind Little Boy.

"Has my boy been a little defender and been kind to dumb animals today?"

"Yes, grandma. I let your canary out of the cage, and when my cat caught it I set Towser on her."

A Change of Opinion.

"I suppose, old fellow, your wife still thinks she married a treasure?" remarked a bachelor to a married friend.

"No," said the benedict; "I have a distinct impression that she regards me as a treasury."

A Soft Answer.

The wife of a man who came home late insisted upon a reason.

"When I go out without you," he said, "I do not enjoy myself half as much, and it takes me twice as long."

Must Have Been Poor.

Critie—Where did you get the idea for that play? Playwright—Out of my head, of course. What do you mean? Critie—You must be glad that it is out!

Ambition is like love—impatient both of delay and rivals.—Denham.

SHOES IN JAPAN.

A Man Will Wear Out From Eight to Ten Pairs a Year.

The shops and booths of Japan are of unflinching interest. Here the greengrocer and fruit seller has arranged his wares till it seems as though one looked upon a great bouquet. There the flower shop blazes in brilliance and the lantern maker squats at his multi-colored task. At the next entrance we perhaps see a man severing chicken meat from the bone, and he performs the operation as skillfully as the surgeon with his dissecting knife. Beef and chicken are commonly sold in this fashion.

Two or three paces farther on one is confronted with a typical Japanese shoe store. All the footwear of the little brown man is here on view. The geta (wooden clogs) and straw sandals are indeed a fanciful exhibition. They line the benches, the floors, the shelves. They hang from above and seemingly are everywhere, allowing the seller just about enough room to squat on his mat. The newcomer is at once startled at the immense quantity of this simple footwear and the many places where it is sold, but he soon finds a solution to his query when he hears that a Japanese man annually makes away with from eight to ten pairs.—Christian Herald.

SIZE OF WHALES.

Length of the Biggest Ones and the Height They Can Spout.

A government official who has made a special study of whales states that the average length of a full grown sulphur bottom whale is just under eighty feet. This estimate disregards the exaggerated reports sometimes spread by sailors and is based on actual measurements of many individual specimens. There seem to be credible accounts of whales reaching a length of from eighty-five to ninety-five feet, but the authority quoted has never seen any of that size.

Whales appear to grow with great rapidity, the length of yearlings being estimated at from thirty to thirty-five feet.

How high can whales spout? Photographs taken by the scientist referred to give a means of measuring with some accuracy the height to which the water is thrown. This appears to be much less than it has often been supposed to be. It is claimed that even the great sulphur bottom whale on the average spouts to a height of only fourteen feet, although occasionally the height may be as much as twenty feet.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

A Just Beast.

In the days when the late archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Frederick Temple, was master of Rugby he sentenced to expulsion a boy who was innocent of the offense charged against him, but who could not clear himself without exposing the real offender. The lad made up his mind to bear the punishment and wrote to his father saying that he was sure his family would rather have him expelled than know him to be a sneak. The father promptly sent the letter to Dr. Temple, calling attention to a postscript in which the boy said he wished the doctor to understand the matter and added, "Temple is a beast, but he is a just beast." It is on record that Temple did understand, and the boy was not expelled. Dr. Temple, grim old man that he was, was always proud of the title "a just beast."

Good Shooting.

The story below of certain Virginia mountaineers whose patriotism was only equalled by their marksmanship, is one told by C. K. Bolton in the American Historical Review.

In 1775 500 recruits were needed, but many more came forward, and the commanding officer decided on a shooting match to determine their proficiency. A board one foot square, bearing a chalk outline of a nose, was nailed to a tree at a distance of 150 yards. Those who came nearest the mark with a single bullet were to be enlisted. The first forty or fifty men who shot cut the nose entirely out of the board.

Might Be Saved.

A Kansas butcher was driving a cow to his slaughter house when a stranger stopped him and said: "What are you going to do with that cow?" "I'm going to kill her," said the butcher. The stranger looked the cow over carefully. "Oh, I don't believe I'd do that. If you feed her up awhile I think she'll live."—Kansas Magazine.

A Hit.

"I made a great hit at the banquet last night. Came off with a good deal of distinction, in fact."

"I didn't know you ever spoke at banquets."

"I don't. I was the only one there who absolutely declined."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Modern Eccentricity.

"What an eccentric person young Duckworth is."

"I've never noticed it. He seems to me to be rather a sensible sort of chap."

"But he wants to name his baby daughter Sarah."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Pathetic Proof.

"My Jim is dead, my Jim is dead!" wailed an old colored mammy, holding up a letter. "There is a letter from him right from the dead letter office!"—Woman's Home Companion.

Life, like a dome of many colored glass, stains the white radiance of eternity.—Shelley

Mrs. H. Ryttenberg has returned to the city after a visit to Baltimore.

Dogs In Harness In Belgium.

Dogs that work in Belgium are bought and sold in the open market like horses, and if strong and well broken they bring from \$20 to \$25 each. In manufacturing towns there is the usual number of horses, but for every horse you will see two dogs in harness on the streets. Early in the morning market women drive them hitched to carts loaded down with vegetables. The grocer, the expressman, the butcher and baker, all employ dogs to do the work of horses. They are much quicker than the horse, and size for size they can draw a heavier load. It is said the dog in harness will go twice as far as the horse within the same time. They are driven in wagons, single, double, treble and four-in-hand. They are often kept in livery barns like horses, are fed generally on black bread and horseflesh and cost in board from 5 to 6 cents per day. They are sleek and well kept and appear to enjoy their work.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Drop of Water.

Figures are sometimes impressive simply by being so stupendous that the human mind grasps them with difficulty. An instance in point is afforded by the illustration once offered to his hearers by an eminent scientist, who, in order to bring to their comprehension the idea of ultimate particles of water, stated that if he was to empty a tumbler containing half a pint of water, letting out each second a number equal to 1,000 times the population of the earth, it would require somewhere between 7,000,000 and 47,000,000 years to empty the tumbler. Lord Kelvin has assured us that if a drop of water was magnified to the size of the earth the particles would be between the size of cricket balls and footballs. If that statement is correct the drops of water in all the oceans are not many times so numerous as the particles, or molecules, in a single drop.—St. Louis Republic.

When Baronets Were Bold.

It was in the reign of good King James that baronets first came into existence. Today you could hardly tell a baronet from a banker. But in the year 1611, when James I. needed ready money and created 200 "little baronets" to supply him with cash, they swagged about in their baldrics and sashes and behaved in the courtliest of fashion. Each baronet in order to justify his title had to maintain a small army of thirty soldiers for three years. In this way the crafty king not only increased his revenue, but actually lightened his expenses.

It is not generally known that the title of "baronetess" has twice been bestowed on women. One of these was the mother of a Dutch general. The other was a Nottingham lady named Dame Maria Boiles, who won her way into the good graces of Charles I. and received the title from his hands.—London Tit-Bits.

When He Was Bad.

It has been said that you never know a man till you travel with him, and certainly traveling has a tendency to bring out all the depravity innate in human nature. Out of this test, however, Benjamin Disraeli emerged with flying colors. This is what was said of him by Mrs. Austen, who with her husband traveled with him when he was quite a young man, as related in Mr. Monypenny's biography:

"Your brother," she says (the letter was addressed to Disraeli's sister, "is so easily pleased, so accommodating, so amusing and so actively kind that I shall always reflect upon the domestic part of our journey with the greatest pleasure. Your brother has behaved excellently, except when there is a button, or, rather, buttons, to be put on his shirt; then he is violently bad, and this happens almost daily."

Whales In Nets.

Just south of the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, where in a landlocked harbor beautiful Wangamumu nestles in the shadow of Cape Brett, there is established a whaling station, and here is carried on the unique business of catching whales by means of nets set in a narrow channel between rugged rocks. The cetaceans frequent this passage. It is said, to rub off the accumulation of sea growing parasites gained in long journeys through deep water.

The Word Vaudeville.

The word "vaudeville" sprang from Vaux de Vire, the name of a hamlet in the picturesque town of Vire, in Switzerland. In the fifteenth century this town was the home of Oliver Basselin, the author of witty drinking songs. One of the best known of these songs was a merry dissertation on the author's red nose.

He Didn't.

The wife of a clergyman warned him as he went off to officiate at a funeral one rainy day:

"Now, John, don't stand with your bare head on the damp ground; you'll catch cold."

The Reason.

"Why is that man always grunting so about his business?"

"I don't know, unless it is the force of association. You see, he deals in pig iron."—Baltimore American.

He Was Immune.

Morrow—It makes me very uneasy if I owe a dollar to any one. Borrow—Great Scott! If I felt that way about it I'd have St. Vitus' dance.—Boston Transcript.

The great soul that sits on the throne of the universe is not, never was and never will be in a hurry.—Timothy Titcomb

Mr. Dan McLaurin, of Wedgfield, was in the city Monday.

Was Good Once.

A certain well known composer now in the full vigor of his established reputation was at one time when he was comparatively unknown engaged in writing the music for a production fathered by two managers who knew exactly what they wanted, in addition to knowing next to nothing of the musical classics. After having burned much midnight oil and worked himself into a state of semicollapse in a vain endeavor to produce a finale which would please them the composer tore up page after page of rejected manuscript and in despair took to the theater an entire section of "Faust" to which he had somehow managed to fit the words assigned to him. He played it over, and one of the managers said quite unfeelingly, "Well, Gus, the others were pretty bad, but this one is the rottenest of them all." "So?" remarked the weary musician dryly. "It was considered good when Gounod wrote it!"—Metropolitan Magazine.

One Story Eclipsed.

"Hot in Brazil?" said the young man who had just returned from a trip to South America. "Well, I should say so. Do you know, for days at a time we couldn't take our after dinner siesta on account of the peculiar noises."

"What noises?" asked the blond stenographer innocently.

"Why, the coffee popping on the trees. You see, the sun was so hot the grains just roasted before they were picked."

The old traveler yawned.

"Rather warm down there, bub," he rejoined laconically, "but when I was down there you couldn't sleep at night. Every once in awhile there would sound the most extraordinary crackling noise that ever fell upon the human ear."

"What were the sounds, Mr. Bings?" And Mr. Bings yawned again and replied, "The rubber trees stretching themselves."—Chicago News.

Where One's Breath Falls as Snow.

Verkholsk, a small village in the northeast of Siberia, is the coldest place in the world. It is a convict station. No precautions against escape are needed, for Verkholsk is guarded by the wind. Though the average temperature of the three worst winter months is 85 degrees of frost, intense cold like this is easy to bear in calm weather. But a strong breeze at that temperature or within 20 degrees of it will kill every living thing not under shelter. In the icy cold of Verkholsk an iron ax head dropped on the ground smashes like glass. A board of unseasoned wood, on the other hand, freezes as hard as steel. Frozen nicotine blocks the stem of tobacco pipes, while one's breath falls at one's feet in a fine white powder.

Going Too Far.

Along a country road walked a man and woman. The latter, a gaunt, stern faced female, was bullying the meek little fellow, who trudged just in front of her with downcast head. Suddenly the woman, turning, saw a bull racing down the road behind them. She quickly took refuge in the hedge, but her companion, unconscious of aught but his woes, kept on his way. The bull caught up to him and sent him spinning into a muddy ditch, then continued on its wild career. As the woe-begone figure crawled out of the mire he saw his better half coming toward him. Plucking up a little spirit, he whimpered, "M-M-Maria, if you hit me like that a-g-g-gain you'll really get my temper up, so I warn you."

More and More.

The gravedigger in "Hamlet" was a very witty man, wittier far than many of the epigram makers who have adorned headstones with their jingles. A sample of the punning rhymes which are cut on tombs follows. It comes from the grave of William More, at Stepney, near London:

Here lies one More, and no more than he. The More and no more—how can that be? Why, one More and no more may lie here alone. But here lies one More, and that's more than one.

Curiosities of Etymology.

It is extraordinary how words for the same thing differ in even so small a country as England. Take "left handed," for example. In Gloucestershire such a person is described as "scrammy," in Staffordshire he becomes "craggy," the phrase for a left handed Yorkshireman is "gawkrodder" or "callick handed," and in the next county, Durham, he is "cuddy paw."—London Telegraph.

Experience Teaches.

"I wonder what has happened to Mr. Green?" said Mrs. Brown to a lady friend. "He seems so dismal now, and he used to be a practical joker!"

"Ah," was the response, "he proposed as a joke to his present wife. She accepted him, and he says he will never indulge in a joke again."

A Prank of the Types.

A sentimental novelist, describing his heroine as one who "always kept modestly in the background," was horrified to find it recorded in print that she "always kept modesty in the background."

As Usual.

"So your Shakespeare club is a great success?"

"Yes. We have accumulated enough fines for nonattendance to take us all to a musical comedy."—Washington Herald.

Naturally.

A girl feels flattered when told she looks well in anything, but a wife thinks such a compliment only a plot to get her to wear old clothes.

Time ripens all things. No man is born wise.—Cervantes.

Worked the Visitor.

"Speaking about visiting Englishmen," said a hotel manager recently who had been reading about one in the newspapers, "reminds me of one that came to the Palmer House in Chicago some years ago when I was room clerk out there. He and another had been paying a visit to the Rockies, and their last stopping place had been Cheyenne. Coming east they had fallen in with some Americans who made themselves agreeable, with this result:

"After they had put their names on the register one of the Englishmen leaned over the desk.

"I say," he whispered, 'I am expecting President Cleveland's son to call this evening to return £50 which I lent him on the train. Will you please put the money in the safe for me if I do not happen to be in?'

"I promised," he had not the heart to shatter his confidence in human nature. President Cleveland didn't happen to have such a thing as a son at that time."—New York Sun.

Royal Perquisites.

The king has many privileges which he never exercises. He enjoys an immemorial right to all gold and silver mines, not only on his own land, but upon any of his subjects' lands within his dominions. So shareholders in Rand and Westralian mines would have to forego their dividends if the king felt avariciously disposed. The king is also entitled to a yearly tribute from his tailor, consisting of a pair of white doves, a pound of cummin seed, a pair of scarlet hose and a silver needle.

All sturgeons and whales caught in British waters are royal perquisites. The whale has a split liability. Its tail belongs to the queen, while its head goes to the king. It is generally assumed that the partition was decided upon in order that the queen should always be supplied with whalebone, but if so the founder of this act of beneficence committed the mistake of giving the queen the wrong half.—London Chronicle.

Witty Ann Pitt.

Bolingbroke called England's great statesman, William Pitt (Lord Chatham), "Sublimity Pitt," and he dubbed his sister Ann "Divinity Pitt." But that must have been long after there were written and received the delightful letters addressed to Pitt's "Dearest Nanny," his "little Nan," his "little Jug."

"Oh, for the restless tongue of dear little Jug!" he exclaims in a letter written by him from Northampton when, a lad of twenty-three, he had but lately joined his regiment.

Ann Pitt's restless tongue was never stilled, for when Chesterfield, calling on her in his later life, complained of decay with the words, "I fear that I am growing an old woman," Ann briskly replied:

"I am glad of it. I was afraid you were growing an old man, which, as you know, is a much worse thing."

Branding Loafers.

The brand of "S" figures in an extraordinary act passed by parliament in 1547. An able-bodied man or woman found loitering and not seeking work for the space of three days could be seized and brought before two justices of the peace, who, upon confession or on the proof of two witnesses, "shall immediately cause the said laborer to be marked with a hot iron on the breast the mark of 'V' and adjudge the said person living so idly to his presentor, to be his slave for two years. The said slave shall be made to work by beating, chaining or otherwise." If convicted of running away during this period the justices could cause him to be branded on the forehead or the cheek with the letter "S" and then adjudged to his master as a slave forever. For running away a second time the penalty was death.—London Standard.

Illustrated His System.

It was a habit of the wise Frenchman Arago to look during his lectures at the young man who appeared the dullest of the students, and when he perceived that this one understood he knew all the others did.

Once in a drawing room he had just explained this habit of his to some friends when a young man entered and saluted him familiarly.

"But to whom have I the honor of speaking?" asked the scientist.

"Why, Professor Arago, you do not know me? I always attend your lectures, and you never take your eyes off me the whole time."

Kaffir English.

As a sample of Kaffir English here is a love letter sent by a Cape Colony boy to his dusky innamorata:

Dear Miss—I have great confidence in thundering the width of my opinion that I shall thank for kindness if you will give me the privilege of lettering with you concerning love, as your most winning face has drawn my serious attention to you, and that I shall appreciate you in anticipation of an early reply and also terminating this with supreme and high enunciation. NED.

Taken at His Word.

"Since you are so busy today," said the urbane journalist, "will you kindly tell me when and where I can meet you for an interview?"

"Go to blazes!" exclaimed the fate politician.

"Thanks. Will I consider it an appointment?"—Washington Star.

Desperately Ill.

Mrs. Parke—Your husband has been ill, hasn't he? Mrs. Lane—I never saw him so ill. Why, for two weeks he never spoke a cross word to me.

Kindness is a language the dumb can speak and the deaf can hear and understand.—Boyce.

Senator Lorimer should turn State's evidence.—Chicago Tribune.

Rev. H. A. Knox, of Mayesville, was in the city while Monday.

Mr. Colin McLaurin, of Wedgfield, was in the city Monday.